The Union Cabinet decided to bring up a legislation under article 309 of the Constitution to regulate the salary and service conditions of the judicial officers in Union Territories and to introduce a Special Judicial Allowance (SJA) @ 10% of the existing basic pay to the judicial officers. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 9th May, 2003.The Bill has now been referred to the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs for examination and report.

High Court Bench in Sambalpur

826. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal for setting up a High Court Bench in Sambalpur;

(b) whether such a decision would facilitate disposal of the pending cases;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P.C.THOMAS): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) The setting up of a Bench of a High Court away from its principal seat is considered on the receipt of a complete proposal from the concerned State Government with the consent of the Chief Justice of that High Court.

New guidelines for CPC

†827. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether implementation of the new guidelines for the Civil-Procedure Code has resulted in fast disposal of civil cases on a large scale;

(b) if so, the number of cases disposed off in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Government are considering to bring an amendment in view of the increasing number of pending criminal cases in the courts due to witnesses turning hostile resulting in acquittals in most of the cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P.C.THOMAS): (a) The impact of amendment to Civil Procedure Code effected in July, 2002 has not been assessed yet.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Law Commission in its 178th Report has recommended insertion of Section 164(A) in the Code of Criminal Procedure with a view to preventing the evil effects of witnesses turning hostile.

The Report has been referred to the State Governments for their comments as the Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure Code are in the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India. Implementation of the recommendation is subjected to receipt of the comments from the State Governments, introduction and passage of an amendment bill in Parliament for which no time-frame can be fixed.

Improvement in judicial system

†828. SHRI KAPIL SIBBAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a need to make comprehensive improvements in the judicial system of the country;

(b) if so, Government's reaction in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government have received several suggestions in the past for this purpose; and

(d) if so, the suggestions received and the action taken by Government so far to implement these suggestions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P.C.THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The canvas of judicial reforms is very wide, encompassing wide spectrum of issues concerning different departments of the Government.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.